Rexall Flu Shot

Immunization side effects are minor. Influenza risk is major.

Protect yourself: Know the facts

Influenza, also commonly known as "the flu," is an infection of the airways caused by the influenza virus. It circulates every year in Canada, mainly in Fall and Winter. The flu is contagious, meaning it is easily caught and easily spread to others. **If you become infected with the flu, you can spread it to others from 1 day before your first symptoms appear and up to 5 days after**. Flu symptoms like headache, chills and dry cough are often rapidly joined by body aches and fever. While the fever can improve on the second or third day of the illness, full recovery may take up to 6 weeks.

Flu Shot Facts

- You should get immunized as soon as flu season starts. Immunity can take up to 2 weeks to develop after getting the flu shot – Just in time for peak flu season.
- Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding can get the flu shot.
- The flu shot is free in most provinces and territories.
- Mild soreness at the injection site is common. Some patients may experience headaches and muscle pain.

Immunization is the best prevention.

The influenza virus can have minor or major changes each year, so vaccination every Fall provides you with the right protection against the currently circulating version. It also reduces the severity of the infection should you contract it.

It is especially important for the following people to get a flu shot, because they are at greater risk of complications:

Anyone with conditions including: • **heart or lung disease** • **diabetes or any other metabolic disease** • **cancer** • **kidney disease** • **a blood disorder** • **a weakened immune system**	Seniors (65 years+) and anyone who lives/works/volunteers in a nursing home, chronic care facility, retirement home or other health care setting
	Emergency service workers
	Pregnant individuals
	Indigenous individuals
	Anyone, including children, who lives in the same household or is in contact with people at risk such as those mentioned above

Influenza causes severe complications for thousands of people each year.

While most people recover fully, influenza may lead to more severe and life-threatening illnesses, such as pneumonia or heart complications, resulting in hospitalization and even death. Vaccination is the only preventative measure that has been proven to reduce mortality (death) rates caused by influenza.

You should NOT get a flu shot if you:

Have had an anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose	Are under 6 months of age
Have developed Gullian-Barre Syndrome within 6 weeks of a previous dose	Currently have a serious acute illness (postpone until you are well)

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Flu vs. COVID-19

1. The flu shot does not protect you from COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccine does not protect you from the flu. Consider getting both vaccines to best protect yourself.
2. Symptoms of COVID-19 and Influenza may be very similar. However, COVID-19 is more contagious and may have more severe complications.
3. If you are unsure if your symptoms are cold, flu or COVID-19 related, **CALL** your pharmacist or health care professional for instructions on getting tested for COVID-19.

Please note that there are various overlapping symptoms for each virus. Some symptoms may be more common while others may be usually reported by patients. Symptoms may differ for everyone.

Symptom	Cold	Flu	COVID-19
Fever	Rare	Usual, high fever (102° F / 39° C - 104° F / 40° C), sudden onset, lasts 3-4 days	Usual
Headache	Rare	Usual, can be severe	Usual
General aches & pains	Sometimes, mild	Usual, often severe	Usual
Fatigue and weakness	Sometimes, mild	Usual, severe, may last 2-3 weeks or more	Usual
Extreme exhaustion	Rare	Usual, early onset, can be severe	Usual
Runny, stuffy nose	Common	Common	Common
Sneezing	Very Common	Sometimes	Unusual
Sore throat	Common	Common	Common
Cough, Chest Discomfort	Sometimes, mild to moderate, hacking cough	Usual, can be severe (e.g., troubling breathing that requires immediate emergency care)	Usual, Dry cough, can be severe (e.g., troubling breathing that requires immediate emergency care)
Loss of Taste or Smell	Rare	Rare	Common
Complications	Sinus congestion, earache/ear infection, asthma attack	Pneumonia, respiratory failure, worsening of chronic condition, can be life-threatening	Pneumonia, respiratory distress and/or failure, worsening of chronic condition, can be life-threatening
Prevention	Frequent hand-washing	Annual vaccination, frequent hand-washing and avoiding close contact	Vaccination, frequent handwashing, physical distancing, timely COVID-19 testing

For more information, please speak to your pharmacist.